the Richmond Review

April 2023 RichmondSunsetNews.com FREE

Great Blue Herons Perform Annual Encore at Stow Lake

They're back! Great Blue Herons have returned to nests at Golden Gate Park's Stow Lake. Pictured above is an adult heron with three chicks. Photo by Jim Sullivan.

By Nancy H. DeStefanis

Great Blue Herons have nested at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park since at least 1993. Overall, 270 chicks have fledged at two sites – the island by the Stow Lake Boathouse and the island by the waterfall. The herons are charismatic birds; their courtship rituals are elaborate and beautiful. The chicks closely resemble little dinosaurs with punk mohawks.

Starting April 15, San Francisco Nature Education volunteers will show the herons and their chicks to the public through high-powered spotting scopes. The program runs six Saturdays and concludes May 20. The observation site is open at Stow Lake each Saturday, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Large signs

Continued on page 15

Synagogue Shooting Suspect Charged With Felonies

By Thomas K. Pendergast

After walking into a Richmond District synagogue and firing off shots using blank cartridges, a suspect now in custody faces multiple felony charges and has a Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) against him.

Dmitri Valerie Mishin, 51, of San Francisco faces six counts of felony interfering with religious worship, with hate crime enhancements for each count, plus misdemeanor charges of disturbing religious meetings and six counts of drawing or exhibiting an imitation firearm, according to the San Francisco District Attorney's Office.

Documents from the San Francisco City Attorney's Office, responsible for giving Mishin the GVRO in a separate civil court action, allege that on Feb. 1, at approximately 7:20 p.m., Mishin walked into the Schneerson Center on Balboa Street, a synagogue that serves Russian-speaking Jews, spoke a few words of "broken Russian," then pulled a handgun out and fired at least six rounds of blank ammunition around the room and toward the ceiling.

Although he did not point or fire his gun at anyone in the room, the shooting interrupted a group of about a dozen elders who were eating dinner at a banquet table a few feet away after evening prayers. Before leaving, he "muttered something about Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency," according to the court documents.

Two witnesses quoted in a police incident report stated that when Mishin entered, they heard him say either "Shalom" or "Shalom Jerusalem" using the Russian word for Jerusalem. And then they heard him say either "give my greetings to Mossad" or "greetings to Mossad" before he left.

Continued on page 5

Board of Supes Approves $26.8 Million Boost for SFPD

By Thomas K. Pendergast

After some verbal sparring at San Francisco's City Hall, the Board of Supervisors kept the SFPD approved a $26.8 million bailout to pay for more officer overtime.

San Francisco Mayor London Breed's supporters included Supervisors Joel Engardio and Catherine Stefani. Running some resistance were Supervisors Dean Preston, Connie Chan and Myrna Melgar, among others.

This latest feud started when Breed's supporters held a press conference on March 7 in the Tenderloin District, part of Preston's turf.

"Sadly, your supervisor at the Tenderloin isn't here today and that's a real problem," Breed said. "We are short 541 cops and we are feeling it. It's not just about showing up and the arrest; it's also about the investigation. There's work that has to go into that and we need police officers to do that."

Breed then leveled her sights at the remaining supervisors.

"We have got to put pressure on the Board of Supervisors, minus the four who are co-sponsors … to get this work done. The future of the City depends on it. The safety of the community depends on it," she said.

Engardio said Taraval Station serves the largest geographic area in the City – from Twin Peaks to the Pacific Ocean and from Golden Gate Park to Daly City – with 130,000 residents.

"On any given night, there are seven police officers patrolling the streets," Engardio said. "It would be lower if not for the overtime that we're paying."

Taraval Station has lost half its officers in the last four years, from 130 to 65, according to Engardio.

"It's not just about the money," he said. "The last police

Continued on page 14

Kehinde Wiley Debuts Ambitious Exhibit at the de Young

By Noma Faingold

"Art should show you
something you've never seen
before." – *Kehinde Wiley*

The gallery walls are painted a saturated, deep brick color. They envelop. Each room is as dark as a theater, right as the play is about to start. Spotlights hit the billboard-size paintings and larger-than-life sculptures for maximum drama. You cannot look away.

Kehinde Wiley's most ambitious exhibit, "An Archaeology of Silence," which opened at the de Young Museum on March 18 and runs through Oct. 15, will inspire, unsettle, disarm and maybe change the outlook of those who experience it.

"I wanted to create a kind of religious feeling in the museum space," Wiley said. "I'm insisting upon the sacred and the profane in that way."

Wiley plays with the scale (his largest and smallest works share the spaces) and fearless composition to provide an atmosphere both intimate and epic; heroic and fragile.

"I am attempting to create a sense of awe, a sense of power and vulnerability," he said.

Los Angeles-born Wiley, 46, who earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI) and an MFA at Yale University, mastered the Old Masters before turning traditional portraiture into heightened realism full of dichotomies. He became most known for taking classic western art motifs and painting his subjects (mostly unknown Black men), whom he selected through street casting and painting them in noble, austere poses, previously reserved for aristocrats and royalty. Wiley always made sure the details of hair and attire were of the moment, often referencing pop culture, from casual streetwear to luxury brand logos.

"So much of my work has been about these large-scale portraits of people standing proud, being celebrated in their own illustrious light and lending that power to people who happen to look like me," Wiley said. Wiley is perhaps best known for being selected by Barack Obama to paint his official presidential portrait for the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery. The unconventional, celebrated portrait toured several U.S. museums last year, including the de Young.

Wiley stands in front of his painting titled, "Femme piquée par un serpent (Mamadou Gueye)," 2022, oil on canvas. ***Photo by Noma Faingold.***

In "An Archeology of Silence," which premiered last summer during the Venice Biennale and makes its U.S. debut at the de Young, Wiley takes a sobering turn in depicting the fallen in sculptures and paintings – heroes, martyrs, saints and victims – Black men and women mostly in supine positions.

"It's asking a lot of the viewer to be able to see all that," Wiley said.

Continued on page 15

INSIDE

Purusha Yoga Studio Re-Opens on Balboa Page 12

Rapid 29-Bus Update Page 4

Introducing Patreon Page 7

Announcements Page 11

Police Blotter Page 13

Looking Back

Kinen Carvala

Sue Bierman Grove

What if the Golden Gate Park Panhandle had a freeway running through it?

Despite America’s love affair with the automobile after World War II, no freeway directly connected the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge and the Golden Gate Bridge between Hayes Valley and the Presidio, so traffic relied on city streets.

“A Report to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on the Panhandle and Golden Gate Freeways: A Joint City-State Study” advocated for building both a “Panhandle Freeway” and a “Golden Gate Freeway.” (The Golden Gate Freeway would have approximately followed San Francisco’s northern bay shoreline.)

President Franklin D. Roosevelt was interested in using a highway construction program to provide jobs during the Great Depression. During World War II, U.S. General Dwight Eisenhower noted the advantage of Germany’s highway network, the Autobahn. As president, Eisenhower called for an improved highway system in his 1954 State of the Union address to Congress, which passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1956 and authorized $25 billion from fiscal years 1957 through 1969, according to the National Archives. The federal freeway funds had to be spent by 1972 or else the funds would revert to the general account, according to professor of geography Katherine M. Johnson.

Authorities behind highway construction focused narrowly on funding sources and traffic flow, not on what is today known as “environmental review,” according to Johnson. It was left up to S.F. supervisors and local organizations to bring up these concerns during the public debate about freeways.

A circle of trees, a plaque and three benches are all dedicated to Sue Bierman, who was a leader in the fight to stop a plan to run a freeway through the Panhandle on the east end of Golden Gate Park. *Photo by Michael Durand.*

City and state officials butted heads over freeway plans. The City Planning Commission’s special subcommittee criticized the State Division of Highways for recommending 2,101 dwelling units be cut along Oak Street for the Panhandle Freeway and losing more than 800 trees for a tunnel under Golden Gate Park’s JFK Drive (then called Main Drive). San Francisco planning director James McCarthy had recommendations that would take up less land, according to Mel Wax reporting for the SF Chronicle on May 21, 1964. Mayor John F. Shelley was described as “still trying to play it cool” despite knowing that no tinkered route could get the votes of six supervisors.

Sue Reynolds was born on Aug. 5, 1924, in Fremont, Nebraska, according to her obituary in the Fremont Tribune. She attended local Midland Lutheran College where she met Arthur K. Bierman, whom she married in 1945. They had two children and later divorced. The Biermans settled in San Francisco in the 1950s. In an interview with Justin Germain from UC Berkeley, Arthur said he encouraged Sue, a stay-at-home mother, to get involved in activism.

Sue and Arthur Bierman co-founded the Haight-Ashbury Neighborhood Council (HANC), one of the organizations behind a May 1964 rally at the Polo Field against the Panhandle Freeway, which was attended by thousands of protestors. According to SF Chronicle reporting, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union broke away from other pro-freeway labor groups. Union spokesman David Jenkins cited not only indefinite disruptions to the Park from construction but also the loss of homes in the Haight-Ashbury for 6,000 people, including union members. The “worst desecration of a beautiful area of San Francisco’s history” is how Albert Meakin, co-chair of the Citizens’ Committee to Save Golden Gate Park, described the Panhandle Freeway proposal. “Parents are urged to bring their children and turn out to show what Golden Gate Park means to us all,” said Robert Barket, HANC logistics chairman.

Bierman with other mothers brought their children to Planning Commission hearings as part of their protest that freeway construction would destroy safe play areas for children and to show a different perspective on freeways to the overwhelmingly male supervisors previously presented with engineering information, writes Germain.

Bierman testified at 1:20 a.m. as the 59th witness against the Panhandle Freeway in front of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in a February 1966 marathon hearing.

Here are some quotes attributed to Bierman by the SF Examiner:

“Here we are again … but the same things are missing. The interchanges aren’t drawn. The models that would show us exactly how this freeway fits into the fabric of our neighborhood are not present. The trees haven’t been counted ….”

On March 21, 1966, a six-to-five vote of the Board of Supervisors rejected the state’s freeway plan for a sixth and final time, according to Johnson. Supervisor Jack Morrisey was persuaded to vote against the Panhandle Freeway after a tour of the area where the proposed freeway would run through the park.

The ideas behind freeway revolt became mainstream, according to Johnson, when on Jan. 1, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the National Environmental Policy Act into law, requiring a comprehensive environmental review for all projects funded with federal aid, including highways.

San Franciscans elected Bierman to the Board of Supervisors in 1992 and 1996. Because of term limits, she was ineligible to run in 2000, which is also when district elections of supervisors started.

Bierman served on the Planning Commission from her 1976 appointment by Mayor George Moscone until 1992 when newly elected Mayor Frank Jordan ended her tenure. Bierman was known as a dissenter on the Commission, opposing high rises that would shadow open spaces, according to Gerald Adams of the SF Chronicle.

Mayor Willie Brown pulled up in a limousine to Bierman’s house on Sept. 5, 2001, whisking her away to a surprise ceremony dedicating a grove of trees with a plaque and three benches to her in the Panhandle near her house, according to the book “Legacy: Portraits of 50 Bay Area Environmental Elders.” San Francisco Board of Supervisors President Tom Ammiano was also present, according to the SF Chronicle. The plaque says:

Dedicated September 5, 2001, to
Honorable Susan J. Bierman

This beautiful grove of trees and greenery honors a true champion, who brought the neighborhoods together in an eight-year struggle to preserve the panhandle. Victory and what the nation called San Francisco’s “Freeway Revolt” came in 1966 when, by one vote, the Board of Supervisors rejected plans to pave a freeway through this wooded concourse to Golden Gate Park. With the same courage, fervor, and concern for the city she loves, she served as a member of the San Francisco Planning Commission from 1976 until 1992, and as a supervisor from 1993 until 2001.

In 2003, Brown appointed Bierman to the Port Commission, which she was a member of at the time of her death on Aug. 7, 2006, at the age of 82.

The Honorable Susan J. Bierman Grove in the Panhandle is roughly 400 feet east of the intersection of JFK Drive and Stanyan Street, near Shrader Street.

Find an archive of Kinen Carvala’s “Looking Back” columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

The Richmond Review
Serving the Richmond District, Sea Cliff, Presidio Heights and
Laurel Heights for more than 30 Years. Monthly distribution: 18,000 newspapers.
April 2023 - Volume 35, #7
P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116 ph: 415-706-6428
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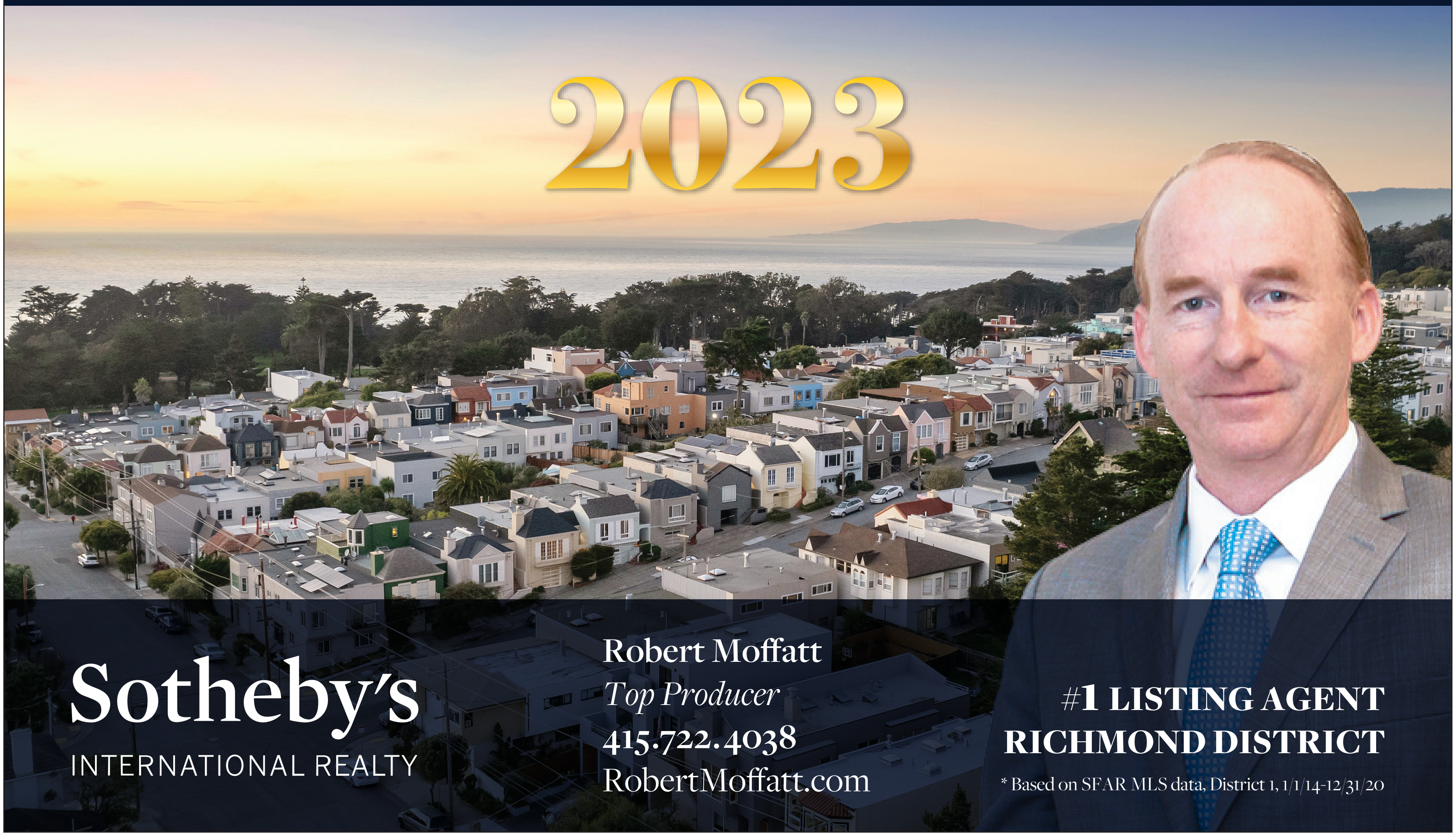

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Muni's Financial Woes Put Plans for Rapid 29-Bus Line on Hold

By Thomas K. Pendergast

Muni's plan for adding "rapid" service to the 29-Sunset bus route is now in financial limbo, as the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) struggles with revenue shortfalls plus requests to bring back other lines eliminated during the pandemic.

The 29-line is one of the longest in the City, starting from the Bayview and running along Ocean Avenue in the south, with service to San Francisco City College. Then it turns northbound up to San Francisco State University and Stonestown Galleria before winding up onto Sunset Boulevard and past A.P. Giannini Middle School, St. Ignatius Preparatory High School, across Golden Gate Park and ending near Baker Beach. Along the way it connects to several major roadways, including Sloat Boulevard, Lincoln Way, Fulton Street and Geary Boulevard.

It served an estimated average of 20,000 riders every weekday before the pandemic, but now it is down to about 14,200 on weekdays.

The "rapid" service would skip less-popular stops along the way, thus hopefully reducing transit times between the stops that are more in demand.

Competing with this plan, however, are other requests to bring back certain lines, express services and rapid lines for other routes, all funded by a reduced budget thanks to revenues still recovering from the COVID-19 shutdown that severely impacted commuter trips to and from the downtown area.

At the same time, pandemic funding from the federal government is ending, adding even more pressure to make spending every dollar the agency has count.

"Revenue is down across all sources, but especially transit fares and the General Fund," said the agency's Public Information Officer Stephen Chun. "If we continue along our current path, we'll have a $130 million deficit in fiscal year 2025, starting in July 2024.

"To get a sense of the size of this deficit, it is the equivalent of more than 20 Muni lines. We're fighting as hard as we can for additional resources. But, right now, we are going to have to pause on adding more Muni service until we have a better understanding of how we're going to address the financial situation. Currently we are only able to make small service changes to address overcrowding."

One possibility now under consideration, according to the agency's planning documents, is to go to the voters with a ballot measure to fund more buses.

"Our goal is to implement a 29-R only if additional revenue were available; we would want to launch the 29-R without impacting existing services," Chun said. "Increased revenue would be needed, but we don't yet have any details on when or how that funding would be pursued. There is no implementation at this time and a 29-R Sunset Rapid requires new, long-term, sustainable revenue to plan and put in place."

Chun said the proposed 29-Rapid route has not been designed yet, so currently they do not have a timeline for its implementation.

In the meantime, however, they will recommend improvements to the existing route this summer.

A "quick-build" alternative to the current route design is planned for later this year. This would include aligning stops from the near side to the far side of intersections, transit signal priority (giving special treatment to buses by adjusting the timing of a given traffic signal's red and green cycles to reduce their time waiting at red lights) and building bus-bulbs boarding ramps to make the buses faster when picking up and dropping off passengers.

Michael Chen, chair of the Citizen's Advisory Council, said they heard concerns from seniors and people with disabilities about another proposal to "consolidate" some of the stops along the way.

"Currently on Sunset Boulevard, most of the stops are spaced about every one or two blocks, and those are avenue blocks so they're fairly large," he said. "SFMTA's best practice is to space those stops every 1,360 feet, or about every quarter mile, about two avenue blocks. So, this would match the same spacing as the 28-19th Avenue (route) on 19th Avenue."

SFMTA Board Director Manny Yekutiel, however, responded that it was

Continued on page 7

Assembly

Assemblymember Phil Ting

Earned Income Tax Credits Explained

The state of California recently aligned its state tax filing deadline with the Internal Revenue Service. That means for residents living in the 51 of 58 counties declared a disaster zone due to recent storms, including San Francisco, they have until Oct. 16 to turn in their returns.

But if you earned $30,000 or less last year, I strongly encourage you to file as soon as you can so that your tax refund can arrive sooner. Prices are higher on almost everything we buy; global inflation has been taking a bite out of everyone's budget. It's especially hard for low-wage workers, often forcing them to cut an expense in order to afford something else.

But there are programs called Earned Income Tax Credits (EITCs), which have been around for years to help give struggling families some financial breathing room. If you earned less than $30,000 last year, I hope you'll take advantage of these tax refunds. Depending on the size of your household, the checks can be sizable – up to $3,417.

In California, CalEITC is considered one of the most effective tools to help lift people out of poverty, putting thousands of dollars into the pockets of folks who need them the most. And for families with young children, the Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC) can add another $1,083 on top of the CalEITC. Increasing the income of low-wage earners not only raises their quality of life, but also stimulates the local economy when EITC tax refunds are spent.

New for the 2022 tax season is a Foster Youth Tax Credit, providing up to $1,083 for 18- to 25-year-olds placed in the foster care system when they were age 13 or up. Many of these young adults face challenges as they enter adulthood; this financial assistance is designed to help them meet expenses.

As chair of the Assembly Budget Committee, I know the value of EITCs and fought over the years to raise the income limit for CalEITC, and pushed for the inclusion of young adults, seniors aged 65+ with no dependents, and self-employed workers. More recently, the legislature allowed Individual Taxpayer Identification Number holders to also claim the state tax credit. For the 2021 tax year, more than 3.6 million Californians were able to claim CalEITC, YCTC or both, putting more than $1 billion back in their wallets.

Unfortunately, not everyone eligible to claim the CalETC does so, leaving millions of dollars on the table. There is also the federal EITC, which can boost tax refunds even higher. Together, the combined cash back from both programs can be life-changing – sometimes more than $10,000 for households with three or more children.

The key to getting this cash back is to file a tax return. Many miss out on EITCs because they don't typically earn enough money to have to file one, or they don't owe taxes. But the paperwork is necessary to receive a check. The money could be used to pay bills or meet everyday expenses. It can also be put into a saving account for emergencies, something that families living paycheck to paycheck struggle to do. The tax credit also has proven additional long-term benefits, with research showing children whose families receive an EITC refund perform better in school and have better health outcomes. Now, that's a great investment!

Are you or someone you know missing out? Nonprofits operating Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs can connect people with free tax preparation services. Filing as soon as possible means you can get your money back faster. Don't wait until October.

For more information, please visit CalEITC4me.org to find out if you qualify, the locations for free tax assistance near you, or how to file a return yourself.

Phil Ting represents the 19th Assembly District, which includes the west side of San Francisco along with the communities of Broadmoor, Colma and Daly City as well as part of South San Francisco. Find an archive of his columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

City Hall

Supervisor Connie Chan

Transit Safety for the Richmond

All Richmond District residents deserve safe and accessible pedestrian walkway and bike connectivity. As supervisor, one of my roles is to demand city departments to deliver city services in the Richmond, calling on departments to be accountable and responsive to our community's needs, which includes access to safe and accessible streets for various modes of transportation.

This is why I have advocated for ongoing pedestrian and safety improvements throughout the district, including securing state funding, with help from Assemblymember Phil Ting, for bus bulbouts on Fulton Street when SFMTA faced a budget shortfall. And when our neighbors fell victim to traffic collisions, I pushed SFMTA to install safety improvements on Fulton at 37th Avenue, and a rapid flashing beacon at 38th Avenue and Geary Boulevard. All improvements are now in progress.

And because I know that safety cannot be accomplished through individual improvements, as a County Transportation Authority (CTA) commissioner, I allocated funding to develop a comprehensive plan to improve and demand transit safety for the Richmond, known as the District 1 Transportation Study. More information can be found online at sfcta.org/D1-study. The study will identify existing challenges throughout the district and develop near- to long-term strategies to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety, create transit reliability, and shift neighborhood trips from driving to transit, walking and biking.

My office and the CTA staff will partner together and begin conducting outreach later this spring. I invite you to participate and provide your input and feedback on your top priorities to improve transit safety in the district. The study will kick off outreach with a Town Hall on April 27. Please email chanstaff@sfgov.org for more information. My office will use the study's recommendations as a guide to deliver public transit, pedestrian safety and bike connectivity projects.

In addition to the study, to ensure SFMTA is delivering safe and efficient services to the Richmond and communities at large, I have requested SFMTA and SF Fire Department to produce a map analyzing traffic congestions that have slowed our emergency response time, and the SFMTA's plan of enforcement with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) for moving and traffic violations that endanger cyclists and pedestrians.

And specifically, due to recent road closures that have impacted the Richmond District, I have also requested SFMTA and the Recreation and Park Department to report on the progress and implementation of the Golden Gate Park Access and Safety Program now that the voters voted to keep much of JFK Drive in Golden Gate Park closed to cars. The departments already have noted that they have a lot of work to do, including improving disability access, reducing traffic congestion and improving the reliability of Muni lines to the park.

There is much work to be done to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists in the Richmond District, and together with the commitment from city departments and our community, we can accomplish safer streets.

Connie Chan represents District 1 on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. She can be reached at 415-554-7410 or chanstaff@sfgov.org. Find an archive of her columns online at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Synagogue Shooter

Continued from page 1

The previous day, Jan. 31, Mishin allegedly entered the Balboa Theater on Balboa Street and brandished a handgun. He walked into the theater's lobby area with "a live parrot on his shoulder, browsed the merchandise, and asked an employee to take a picture of him using the employee's cell phone."

According to court documents, Mishin smelled like alcohol as he "posed in front of the merchandise and, right before the picture was taken, he pulled out and brandished a handgun. The employee asked Mishin to leave, and he walked out of the theater,"

An incident report from an officer responding to that call said, "The suspect did not point the handgun at anyone; he pointed it up in the air as the photograph was taken." An employee said the suspect stated, "Don't worry, it's a movie production." But none of the employees there could tell if the gun was real or not.

On Feb. 3, the SFPD identified Mishin as the suspect involved in both incidents and they allege that when he was arrested at his residence, they seized a Saiga .308 rifle with seven rounds in the magazine; 100 rounds of .308 caliber ammunition and 100 rounds of .22 caliber ammunition; a replica AK47 with a magazine, another unidentified replica handgun with eight blank rounds in its magazine; and a "broken" rifle.

These are not the only incidents where Mishin attracted police attention. Court documents list several previous contacts going back to July 6, 2011, when he was arrested for allegedly taking a flagpole from a planter box and hitting someone with it.

On July 15, he was arrested for alleged domestic violence. Police got an Emergency Protective Order against Mishin and seized a replica World War II machine gun, two air guns and a replica grenade.

On June 24, 2018, he was arrested after allegedly getting into a fight and throwing an axe at someone.

On Dec. 28, 2019, he was arrested for allegedly stabbing someone during a fight after drinking alcohol all night.

On Feb. 23, 2020, he was arrested after allegedly committing sexual battery against a minor.

On June 13, 2021, he was seen in a park holding a rifle. Police detained him and found he had a .22 caliber rifle and ammunition. He said it was a "movie prop" but police say it was a functioning firearm.

Except for the 2021 encounter, all the other incidents have two things in common. In each case it was noticed that he either had a strong odor of alcohol on his breath or was under the influence of alcohol at the time. In every one of these contacts with police, including the 2021 incident, none of these arrests resulted in a conviction, according to the City Attorney's Office.

"Mr. Mishin is a textbook example of someone who poses a risk to the public and should not have access to firearms," said City Attorney David Chiu in a press release. "Our office is ramping up our gun violence restraining order program, and this case serves as an opportunity to remind the public that GVROs are one of the most effective tools we have to prevent gun violence and save lives."

Mishin's attorney Deputy Public Defender Olivia Taylor, however, argues that the hate-crime enhancements on the charges filed by the District Attorney's Office are not supported by the evidence given at his preliminary hearing.

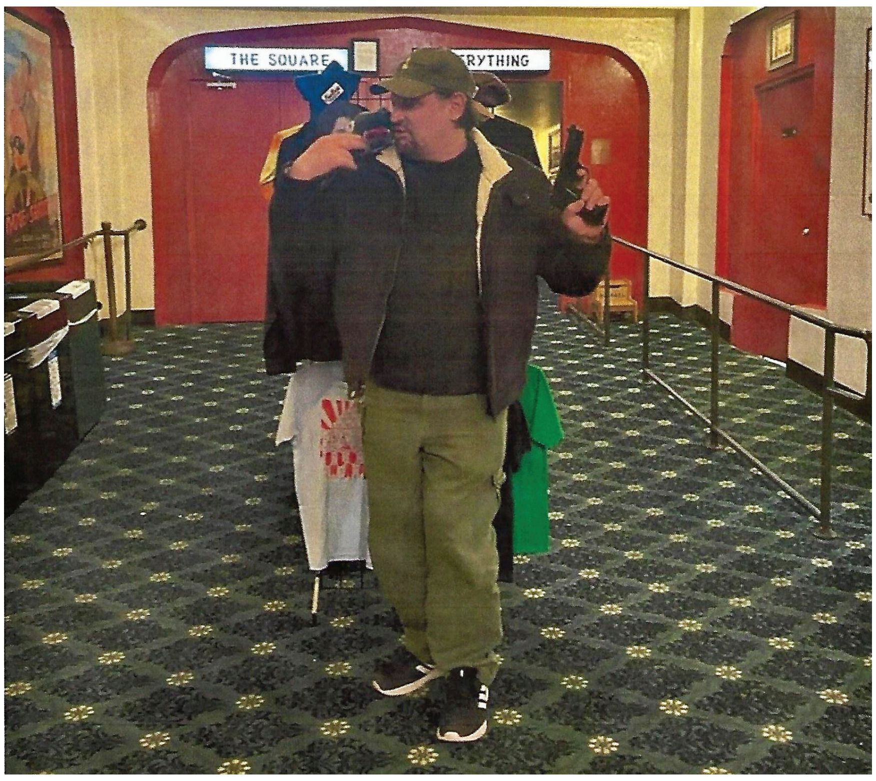
"Judge Loretta Giorgi dropped all hate crime allegations against Dmitri Mishin on March 7, as there was no evidence that Mr. Mishin was motivated by anti-Semitism," Taylor said in an emailed statement. "The evidence clearly showed that Mr. Mishin, a Jewish man and avid military history enthusiast, often dressed up in costume and acted in several movies about World War II, where he played both Russian and German soldiers. Mr. Mishin has long faced mental health challenges, which I believe were the underlying cause of his actions on Feb. 1.

"Unfortunately, the District Attorney's Office has elected to re-file the hate crime allegations that were discharged at the preliminary hearing, despite the lack of evidence to support them. I plan to challenge the prosecution's re-filing of the hate crime allegations in court, and I strongly believe I will prevail based on the factual findings already made during the preliminary hearing."

In an emailed response from the SFDA's office, Communications Director Randy Quezada confirmed that additional charges have been filed against Mishin but did not specify that they were related to hate crimes.

"On March 21, the District Attorney's Office filed additional charges against Dmitri Mishin in connection to the Feb. 1 incident at the Schneerson Center in the Richmond District," Quezada wrote. "The additional charges were filed in light of new evidence presented at Mishin's preliminary hearing."

If convicted of all current charges, Mishin is facing more than 10 years in prison.



One of the allegations against Dmitri Mishin, 51, of San Francisco, is that he brandished a handgun in the lobby of the Balboa Theater, asked an employee to take a picture of him holding it, then walked out. *Photo courtesy of SF City Attorney's Office.*

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Real Estate

John M. Lee

Banking Crisis

March brought us news that two of our local banks are in crisis mode. The feds came in and shut down Silicon Valley Bank. Its competitor, First Republic Bank, is still under tremendous pressure at the time of this writing.

Banks are institutions that provide financial services to individuals, businesses and other organizations. In order to make money, they take deposits from customers and use these deposits to make loans to others who pay interest on the loans. They earn a profit by charging a higher rate than they pay on the deposits.

Banks also offer other financial services, such as credit cards, checking accounts, savings accounts, certificates of deposit (CDs), and various types of loans. They may also provide investment services, such as mutual funds and brokerage accounts. Banks make money by charging a fee on these services. They also invest the deposits in various financial instruments, such as stocks and bonds, to earn additional income.

To insure the safety and soundness of the financial system, the Federal Reserve oversees the operations and has rules and regulations in place to prevent fraud, protect consumers and promote financial stability.

What happened in the 2008 banking crisis is different from this time around. In 2008, the underwriting guidelines for real estate loans were loose and easily manipulated. It felt like, if a borrower was alive and breathing, he could get a loan. Bad credit doesn't matter; no income, no problem; don't have a job, lenders will create one for you. Corruption was widespread, and it led to foreclosure problems.

Large financial institutions, including Washington Mutual, Wachovia, Bear Sterns, Lehman Brothers and Merrill Lynch, all failed and were absorbed by other companies. The feds had to provide large bailouts to Bank of America, Citigroup, Countrywide, AIG and others to insure that our banking system did not fail altogether. Since then, the feds have made changes and regulations to safeguard against this and it is currently working.

This time around, it is a different problem. We have gone through a very low interest rate environment where the banks can get deposits almost interest free. The Fed Funds rate rose from zero to 4.5% in the past 12 months.

The banks were making investments all this time when their cost of capital was near zero percent. Some financial instruments have long-term yields. Since the Fed Funds rates start increasing, banks have to pay more interest for their funds and thus their returns on their investments started going down. When customers started demanding their deposits back, the financial institutions did not have all the funds available and had to sell their investments at losses, leading to further financial and liquidity issues. To their defense, no bank can withstand a large run on its deposits.

Banks collapsing impact real estate and mortgages through reduced access to credits. Banks are the primary source of lending for mortgages and other types of loans. When they fail, it reduces the supply of credit, and other banks may become more risk averse and tighten up their underwriting criteria. This could lead to a slowdown in the real estate market as potential buyers are unable to obtain financing. In addition, banks might increase interest rates, making it more expensive for buyers, leading to a

Continued on page 7

Richmond Homes Sold in March*

Address	Bed	Bath	Sq. Ft.	Price
723 38th Ave.	3	1.00	1,227	$1,165,000
2940 Clement St.	3	2.00	1,604	2,000,000
731 23rd Ave.	4	4.50	2,711	3,200,000
521 Lake St.	3	2.50	2,250	3,400,000
2212 Lake St.	3	4.50	4,395	4,999,000

**Partial listing. Source: M.L.S.*

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From the Editor

Michael Durand

I am very excited to introduce our new Patreon account.

Patreon is like GoFundMe, but instead of donating one lump sum, patrons contribute a small amount every month to a creative cause.

Patreon is used by artists, photographers, musicians and all types of creators to raise funds to keep the creativity flowing. An artist with generous patrons can work on their craft and fill the world with beauty, instead of working at a less-creative endeavor to help make ends meet.

When we put the word out last year that the ad-only model for local newspapers was barely working to pay the bills, we received many generous supporters who donated to our "Nourish Your Neighborhood Newspaper" campaign. THANK YOU ALL! We will be forever grateful for the outpouring of support.

We were especially touched by the notes we received telling us how much our newspaper is loved. So many readers said they look forward to getting the paper each month.

"I read every word of every issue, and have for many years," was just one of many heartfelt notes we received. Support like that truly keeps us going.

The money we received was put right back into the papers. For a while, the Richmond Review was 12 pages. Most of the issues over the last few years have been 16 pages. We also ran a few 20-page issues. We even produced a 24-page paper, all thanks to our supporters.

There are a lot of stories to tell, and a lot of good writers, photographers and editors who work together to let our readers know about our great neighborhood.

We hope you will consider signing up on our Patreon account to donate $5, $10 or more a month to help us continue this important work.

We thank you most sincerely. You really do inspire the work we do.

Your donation also helps us keep our advertising rates low. It is a struggle for owners to keep their small businesses afloat, and your donation will help us keep our rates reaonable to spread the word about services available to our community.

I can't thank our supporters enough. We sincerely appreciate you.

Michael Durand is the editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website.

Sign up to be a Richmond Review patron.

29-Rapid

Continued from page 4

difficult to please everyone.

"This agency is going to need to be thinking about efficiencies in the next few years," Yekutiel said. "Ultimately, this is a public agency that needs to do things. And some of those things people are not going to like and it's going to divide folks. There's always going to be chunks of people that don't like what we decide to do because it affects everyone."

29
SUNSET
Baker Beach
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The Muni 29-Sunset line is one of the longest bus lines in the City, going from the Bayview to Baker Beach. ***Photo by Thomas K. Pendergast.***

John M. Lee

Continued from page 6

decline in home affordability, and a demand for housing.

Realizing this, the feds and other larger banks have stepped up at this time to try to prevent this from happening. The feds tried to calm depositors by promising that all funds exceeding the FDIC limit of $250,000 will be guaranteed. Eleven larger banks have come together to lend First Republic $30 billion to try to keep the bank solvent. However, the stock kept going down. Whether this will work, we will see, but this goes to show how much the other banks are vested in the banking system. We cannot have our whole banking system collapse.

The feds met the third week in March and decided to raise rates by .25% in their continual effort to battle inflation. Prior to SVB collapsing, the consensus was that they were going to raise the Fed Funds rate by .5 or .75%. This is an acknowledgement that rate increases possibly led to the current banking issues and hope that this will ease the problem.

Only time will tell what will happen here. My guess is that one of the larger banks will buy out First Republic. But other banks rumored to be in trouble might also need to merge with larger banks. Stay tuned as there is never a dull moment in real estate!

John M. Lee is a broker with Compass specializing in the Richmond and Sunset districts. If you have any real estate questions, call him at 415-465-0505 or email at johnlee@isellsf.com. Find an archive of John M. Lee's columns at RichmondSunsetNews.com.

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Commentary

Quentin L. Kopp

High-Speed Train Project Off the Rails

In a Dec. 6, 1962, speech in New York City, then-assistant secretary of defense stated: "I think the inherent right of the government to lie to save itself when faced with nuclear disaster is basic." The California High Speed Rail Authority's Northern California Regional Director Boris Lipkin in the San Mateo Daily Journal's Nov. 17, 2022, edition applied such falsity doctrine to that failed project. (I have publicly pleaded guilty of creating such state body with 1996 legislation as a then-state senator.)

Critics have charged that California's once highly publicized electrified high-speed rail project is now a chimera or, worse, a tax-eating boondoggle. A Nov. 17, 2022, letter to the editor from the California High Speed Rail Authority's Northern California Regional Director in The Daily Journal denying such failure reminded of a wry witticism: "Exaggeration is a blood relative to falsehood and almost as bad."

This high-speed flack, paid with taxpayer dollars, accused me (whose legislative authorship created the Authority and enabled his subsequent flackery appointment) of "factually inaccurate statement." Instead, he declared that 119 miles of high-speed track are honestly "already under construction." Yet after I requested, pursuant to the California Public Records Act:, "all current contracts now in effect for construction of track from Merced to Bakersfield and Coachella and Wasco" the Authority's public records administrator informed me last January that "... the Authority ... has no records responsive to this request." That means no construction contract has been let!

The Authority hasn't even acquired by eminent domain or owner agreement all land parcels needed for project construction. At the end of January, the Authority's honest public records administrator stated that total parcels delivered were 2,167 "compared to an estimated 2,305 parcels needed." Environmental clearance for the promised San Francisco to San Jose, San Jose to Merced, Merced to Fresno, Fresno to Bakersfield, Bakersfield to Palmdale, and Palmdale to Los Angeles segments have been obtained, but there's no funding to build. (Did I hear "idle gesture"?)

Of total authorized Authority positions (429), 328 are filled. The remainder are vacant. The legislature last year finally allowed sale of the remaining $4.2 billion general obligation bonds authorized by taxpaying voters in the Nov. 2008 election, but the public records administrator advises that no records of private investment in the project from 2009 until 2022 exist. The Authority admits the project will cost $77 billion to $113 billion. Where's the money for even a diesel system duplicating Amtrak service in the Central Valley, much less true high-speed electrified trains? That's right: the 119 miles from Merced to Bakersfield will accommodate only diesel trains, not electrified.

The project cost for the non-high speed rail portion in the Central Valley increased last month to $35.3 billion from $25.2 billion. It obtains money from a cap-and-trade program which adds 23 cents to every gasoline gallon besides the state's 53.9 cents tax per gallon. Moreover, President Biden's Department of Transportation denied last month a $1.3 billion requested grant for the project, deeming it not "cost effective." (The only construction to date consists of bridges and viaducts in the Central Valley which, State Senator Brian Jones of San Diego asserts, should be demolished if they can't be "repurposed.")

The remaining project mavens seem to have a reverence for the truth. They always keep a respectable distance from it!

Finally, the Authority claims "... the project will not run diesel trains ..." and is "already electrifying the Caltrain corridor ...." The 2008 $9.95 billion state bond issue included $950 million to connect regional train systems like Capitol Corridor, Caltrain and Metrolink (in the L.A. Basin) to high-speed rail. The Authority instead is spending $775 million in bond proceeds to electrify Caltrain.

Caltrain constitutes regional rail service of about 45 miles limited to one set of tracks, not the needed two if true high-speed trains ever operate on the Peninsula and doesn't under state law need to pay all operating expenses from farebox revenue; High-speed rail does, per the voter-approved 2008 bond issue. It's impossible for it to do so in the Central Valley competing against Amtrak in small cities. It's not building tracks from San Francisco to Los Angeles as it promised voters in 2008. It's building a diesel train system (actually only from Coachella to Wasco in Kern County). As the Authority claims, "electrified rail" is in California statutes, but neither Caltrain nor Metrolink is required by state law to be electrified. High-speed electrified rail's California future doesn't now exist; the 2008 ballot vision stained by subsequent misleading of California voters under post-2008 leadership, which manifestly can't contradict facts. Close the project and convey remaining bond proceeds equally to Caltrain and Metrolink with statewide voter approval.

Quentin Kopp is a former San Francisco supervisor, state senator, member of the SF Ethics Commission and retired judge.

Richmond Rapper Kyle Shin – Son of Paper – Releases New Album

By Gui Oliveira

The Richmond District rapper, Kyle Shin – familiarly known as Son of Paper to his fans – released a new album, "From a Rooftop in Chinatown," on Jan. 20. To celebrate the release, he performed at the Cameron House rooftop on Feb. 18.

"From a Rooftop in Chinatown" takes on quite a contrasting musical approach than his previous album, "Always Autumn." Shin incorporates the guzheng, a traditional East-Asian instrument, on the track "Overcame," by teaming up with Winnie Wong.

"We really blended those sounds and found a way to create a soundscape that felt modern but also felt timelessly old, too, with East-Asian sounds," Shin said. Wong is a masterful guzheng player; she first started learning the instrument at the age of 4 and has built a career playing shows, recitals, giving private lessons in San Francisco and more.

Richmond District rapper Son of Paper (Kyle Shin) celebrated the launch of his new album, "From a Rooftop in Chinatown," literally from a rooftop in Chinatown. He said his work was a reaction to the recent proliferation of hate crimes committed against Asian Americans. ***Photo by Gui Oliveira.***

When playing with Shin live, Wong has to interpret his lyrics by "improvising with his work and feeding off of the lyrics, and just adding little melodic riffs and also just that emotional kind of agitation in it." Wong said. The way she improvises on the guzheng really elevates Shin's performance and lyrics by feeling out the message of the song and effectively translating that musically to his audience.

The Cameron House is an important piece of Chinese and San Francisco history, dating back to its founding in 1874 by the Presbyterian Church as the Occidental Home for Girls. During the Chinese Exclusion Act, young girls and women were smuggled into the country and sold as commodities in what came to be known as the Yellow Slave Trade. These girls and women took refuge in the Cameron House where they learned skills and faith. The massive brick building is located at 920 Sacramento St., bordering Nob Hill. Over the years, the Cameron House rooftop has served as a set for filming.

Shin performed on the rooftop, (which is really a basketball court overlooking the Financial District skyscrapers to the east), for a mixed audience of all ages ranging from young kids to seniors and members of the community. People traveled from all over the world to see his show.

"I think the album, 'From a Rooftop,' sprung from hate crimes against Asian Americans," Shin said. "Trying to establish a sense of Asian-American identity and sound has always been a goal of mine as a musician."

The "Mr. Chinatown" music video addresses anti-Asian violence by featuring Shin as someone who is actively a part of the Chinatown community, looking out for and protecting those who are vulnerable to anti-Asian hate. Toward the end of the video, some of the actual community organizers and leaders of Chinatown are shown defending themselves heroically against the bullies.

"He just had this idea for a music video for 'Mr. Chinatown,'" said Leonard Caoili, who worked as director of photography in the music video as well as on other projects with Shin. "He kind of had a rough idea of how it should go, like he wanted to address the Asian hate going on and showing him as a, how do I describe it …? Not necessarily painting him as a savior, but as someone who is able to help out against Asian violence."

Part of the pre-production process was researching the incidents of anti-Asian violence in San Francisco.

"Even though it was depressing to go through, we also had to realize it was an important subject that had to be addressed" Caoili said.

The "Mr. Chinatown" music video can be found on YouTube, along with other original Son of Paper content.

Shin tours twice a year, February through June. He plays bars and clubs with the prospect of getting into the festival circuit. He has friends in Toronto, New York and Connecticut with whom he connects while expanding his fan base. Life on the road is a very grassroots and hands-on process of finding viable venues, not to mention putting together a whole weeks- or months-long tour.

"So, it was very DIY in a sense that we created the tour on our own. It's not like I have a label that's helping me book a tour. It's basically me and my booking manager," Shin said.

Son of Paper's music and videos can be found on Spotify, YouTube and Instagram @sonofpaper.

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Commentary

Brian Quan

Creating a Vibrant Neighborhood

Last month, I started a conversation about how we can work toward a better and more vibrant neighborhood. This time I want to consider what will need to be done to put us on a path toward that vision. Have you considered what a vibrant neighborhood looks like to you?

I went out to The Laundromat on Balboa Street on a recent Sunday night to have dinner and found it bustling. Families were sharing pizzas and dates were getting to know each other over wine as they waited for their food. This newly opened restaurant is a bright spot in the Outer Avenues that shows a spark toward when we used to have great late-night offerings for community building. Let's figure out what steps we as a community can do to help replicate these successes.

Obviously, one data point doesn't tell the whole picture. If small businesses' health is the measuring stick for the health of a neighborhood, then we must start by taking stock of how healthy our business corridors are currently. On my way back from downtown, I thought I'd see how many blocks on Geary had a vacant storefront. Starting at Arguello, I counted 20 blocks with at least one vacancy, and some had multiple "for lease" signs. As one of the most heavily traveled streets in the City, this is a clear disconnect between the status quo and what many would consider a healthy neighborhood.

Having listened to some of the newer business owners, one of the biggest challenges seems to be clarity from the City's permitting process and how easy it can be for anyone to put up another roadblock for them to navigate. Even if you took over a location to operate a similar business you could be hit with issues over unpermitted changes like awnings or range hoods, and that's before having to bring a place into ADA compliance. Yet many strive forward through this plethora of challenges.

With the mayor's recently released plan to streamline the permitting process for new small businesses, how do we as a community build upon these efforts? Some of the more notable delays in other neighborhoods we should seek to avoid are recent situations like El Farolito moving into North Beach and Bissap Baobab in the Mission applying for new permits where competing businesses or neighbors put up objections within the City's numerous approval processes. The west side of San Francisco has traditionally attracted those who enjoy the quieter aspects of city life, which can be at odds with revitalizing our westside business corridors. The current process of veto points unfortunately creates an incentive toward exclusion since anyone can stop or delay changes if they don't see a direct benefit.

Reforming how the City incorporates public input around consensus instead of by objections will be needed to help speed changes to adapt our neighborhood to our new post-COVID realities. This will require greater community responsibility in making sure we are organizing inclusively and affirming positive changes.

Through collaboration we can start to be intentional about the design and feel of our future, otherwise, we risk being locked into our current path that has left us with so many vacant storefronts. Getting buy-in beforehand doesn't mean we will all get what we want, but it works to align our values and goals to ensure outcomes in those directions.

Ultimately, the big change we in this City are going to have to take is embracing a change in mindset. We cannot continue to let individual inconvenience outweigh collective benefits if we as a community are to work together toward a more vibrant neighborhood. With enough problems facing us all where anyone can say "no" to changes we don't agree with, how can we come together to start to say "yes" to things many of us want as possible solutions.

One item I would like to end on is the current outreach process for the SF Municipal Transportation Agency's Active Communities Plan. Here is a clear place where, instead of a street-by-street or bus-line-by-bus-line approach, we can all get involved to decide how we can imagine better ways to move around the neighborhood. Perhaps even have conversations with all the stakeholders that could help us avoid previous conflicts like with Geary and Taraval that will provide ways to help others access and enjoy the west side more. Let's find ways to increase the joy and awe that makes these parts a place where people want to come and stay.

Sign up for project updates via its webpage at www.sfmta.com/projects/active-communities-plan to keep informed of upcoming opportunities. Or reach out to ActiveCommunities@SFMTA.com to request a meeting with the project team in your neighborhood or around a specific corridor.

Brian Quan is a Richmond District native, co-leader of Grow the Richmond, president of the Chinese American Democratic Club, member of the Park Presidio-Sunset Lions Club and participant in monthly Refuse Refuse S.F. street clean-ups.

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Commentary

Julie Pitta

Saving Santos

Santos has the rough hands that speak of a lifetime of hard work. These days, the 63-year-old man heads to a neighborhood market where he unloads boxes and crates, and stocks store shelves. A rent-controlled apartment in the Inner Richmond allows him to hold on – just barely – to a life in San Francisco, one of the most expensive cities in the world.

Two months ago, Santos's quiet existence was upended. His landlord, Veritas, a local company that operates thousands of San Francisco apartments, moved to evict him. Veritas claimed that Santos had failed to pay a single month's rent, amounting to $1,500. Veritas, for reasons that remain unclear, failed to cash his rent check.

It should be noted: Santos had never – not once – missed a month's rent.

A minor mistake with tragic consequences? The truth is not so simple. Veritas buys rent-controlled buildings. Its business plan is based on converting individual apartments into market-rate units. It's a common practice among corporate landlords. The difference is that Veritas, the City's largest, with $72 million in revenue and some 5,000 units under management, is more ruthless in carrying out its agenda.

In 2019, more than 100 Veritas renters sued the landlord for harassment. Among their complaints was that the firm targeted tenants in rent-controlled apartments, allowing their homes to fall into disrepair, ignoring asbestos and mold, and invading renter privacy. For its part, Veritas vigorously denied the charges. What is hard to ignore are the countless evictions Veritas regularly pursues through the courts.

In the days after rent was due, Veritas moved to evict Santos from the apartment he has lived in for 15 years. (Santos, who speaks only Spanish, was unable to read eviction notices sent to him by Veritas and the court.) Word of his plight eventually reached Brad Hirn, a lead organizer for the Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco (HRCSF). The organization is a nonprofit founded in 1979 by a group of elderly parishioners at Old St. Mary's Church. It was organized around condo conversions displacing San Francisco seniors. Today, it takes on all manner of landlord/tenant disputes, like the one that nearly left Santos homeless.

By the time Hirn caught wind of Santos's predicament, an eviction date was set. Only 36 hours stood between Santos and homelessness.

One of Hirn's first calls was to District 1 Supervisor Connie Chan. Few elected officials have been as fierce in advocating for tenants as Chan. (Another, it should be noted, is Supervisor Dean Preston, a practicing tenants' rights lawyer before being elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors.) Not only did the Richmond supervisor grow up in a rent-controlled Chinatown apartment, she represents a district in which about 60% of residents are tenants.

Santos's attorney tried reasoning with the Veritas attorney assigned to the case to no avail. A wrinkle in the law states that once a landlord files an eviction lawsuit with the court, it no longer has to accept money for any outstanding balance. Had Veritas been willing to accept another rent check, Santos could have remained in his apartment under the existing rental agreement.

Instead, the company offered a new lease: The rent was set at market-rate, significantly higher than the $1,500 a month Santos had previously paid. A Sheriff's Deputy arrived the morning of Feb. 1 to remove Santos from his apartment and change the locks on his door. Santos was now homeless. Luckily, a neighbor offered him a bed for the night.

A serious setback, to be sure, but Chan wasn't willing to abandon hope. She convinced Veritas management to meet with her and Hirn. After tense negotiations, the firm relented and accepted Santos' missed rent payment.

"Veritas likes to think of itself as an ethical company," Hirn said. "Santos's situation had the potential to make them look very bad. Supervisor Chan's (pressure) was critical to keeping Santos in his apartment."

The company issued a new lease with a 1% rent increase, as stipulated by San Francisco's rent-control law. After returning home from work that day, Santos received a new set of keys to his home.

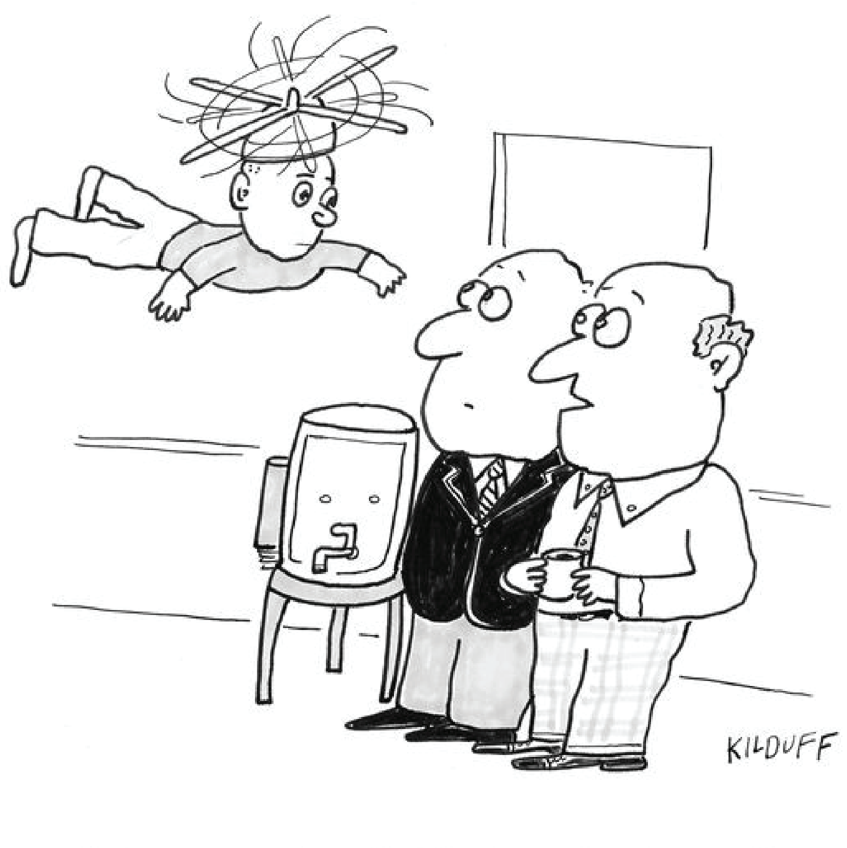
My friend, former District 1 Supervisor Sandra Lee Fewer, once told me that government must work for the people who have no one in their corner. Veritas had a phalanx of lawyers, including a dedicated City Hall lobbyist. In short, it had all the might that money can buy. Santos had a tireless tenants' rights activist and a dedicated public servant. It was a David and Goliath battle complicated by a ticking time clock.

"The best way to solve homelessness is to prevent it from happening in the first place," Chan said.

In this case, David won. In a City that's often hostile to working people, it's an all-too-rare victory.

Julie Pitta is a member of the executive board of the Berniecrats. She is a former senior editor for Forbes Magazine and staff writer for the Los Angeles Times. You can email her at julie.pitta@gmail.com.

Kilduff's Korner by Paul Kilduff



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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I am a senior lady who needs a place to live at a private residence in the west area of San Francisco or Daly City. I have excellent references, am quiet, read a lot, am good company and live by Christian values. Call 415-561-9275 if you or someone you know can provide me a home.

BALBOA STREET BLOCK PARTY

Support the Heart & Soul SF Balboa Street Block Party happening June 17! We believe in building community and highlighting the incredible small businesses around us. We want to bring your neighborhood to you and this block party is a step toward that goal. Donate $50 and join us in supporting our mission! You can find the GoFundMe in our Instagram link in bio. Your donations will help with paying for the SFMTA block party closure permit, temporary no-parking signage, tables, chairs and the live band. There will be music, food and games at the block party. Everyone is welcome. Be a part of the Heart & Soul SF community. Learn more about us at Heartandsoulsf.com or on our Instagram.

CAR AND MOTORCYCLE SHOW

The second annual car and motorcycle show benefitting the only high school auto shop in SF will be held at George Washington High School (600 32nd Ave.) on Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Free for attendees, $35/car or motorcycle entry. For more information, call GWHS Auto Shop Club at 650-703-6237 or 415-699-3933.

COMMENTARIES AND LETTERS

From the editor: All commentaries we publish are the opinions of the writers and should not be considered our editorial stances on issues. We strive to remain neutral and offer a balance of points of view. We invite readers who wish to express their opinions to send a letter to the editor to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Word limit for the newspaper is 350, for the website, 500. RichmondSunsetNews.com.

FELTON TECH SQUAD

Felton's Tech Squad is providing free basic tech support for older adults and people with disabilities in the Richmond District. Ask questions to learn basic skills and how to navigate your smartphone, tablet or laptop. Drop-in for a one-on-one session in English, Cantonese and Mandarin.

- Friday, April 7, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Richmond Library (351 Ninth Ave.)
- Friday, April 14, 1:30-3:30 p.m. at the Anza Library (550 37th Ave. at Geary Blvd.)

For more information, call 415-474-1558 or email techsquad@felton.org.

FREE EVENTS AT THE SF PUBLIC LIBRARY, RICHMOND BRANCH, 351 NINTH AVE., 415-355-5600

ALL-AGE PROGRAM:

"Bel Canto Flutes." Live performance of a range of works by this family friendly and long-running adult amateur flute choir. Saturday, April 1, 1-2 p.m.

TEEN PROGRAM:

"Outdoor Bean Bag Toss." Enjoy some outdoor fun with friends in a challenging game of bean bag toss. For ages 13 to 18. No registration needed. Richmond Teen Back Patio. Tuesday, April 25, 3-5 p.m.

ADULT PROGRAMS:

"Silent Book Club." Bring any book (fiction or nonfiction) for a period of silent reading followed by a discussion with others of what you are reading. Meets every other Wednesday. Wednesday, April 5 and 19, 3-5 p.m.

"Breath meditation." Guided meditation for calm, ease and stress release. Every Thursday, 11a.m.–noon.

"Vegetable Gardening in Containers." Learn how to grow a variety of vegetables, herbs and even fruits on a patio, balcony or any small space using containers. Covers types of containers, which plants to grow for your micro-climate, as well as discussing soil needs and watering options. Saturday, April 8, 1-2 p.m.

"Origami potted plant." Learn how to make a mini origami potted plant. Space limited, reservation required: 415-355-5600 or sign up at the reference desk. Tuesday, April 11, 3-4 p.m.

"Calfresh (food stamps) Assistance." Come and get help on Calfresh enrollment and learn more Calfresh and other free food resources information from Sarah Li, community resource coordinator at the Richmond Center. Tuesday, April 18, 3-5 p.m.

ADULT FILM PROGRAMS:

"Milford Graves: Full Mantis." Unconventional documentary on shaman-like Renaissance man and master percussionist, M. Graves (1941-2021). One of the best "jazz" films to appear in years. NR, 92 min., 2018. Wednesday, April 4, 6-7:30 p.m.

"The Farewell." Comedy-drama. A Chinese-American woman tries to keep her grandmother in the dark about the grandmother's terminal illness. Rotten Tomatoes rating of 97%. Wednesday, April 12, 5:30-7:15 p.m.

"Alcatraz" and "Eberbach." Haunting photography slideshow of Alcatraz Island and a gothic German monastery, with otherworldly music by composer Ingram Marshall (1942-2022). Will change your view of Alcatraz! Not widely available. NR, 48 min., 2013. Saturday, April 15, 3-4 p.m.

"William S. Burroughs." Rarely seen French TV documentary on the Beat writer of "Naked Lunch." Includes passage read from many of his books, set to hallucinatory visuals. NR, 49 min., 2000. Saturday, April 15, 4-5 p.m.

"Thelonious Monk: Straight, No Chaser." Landmark b&w documentary on the great jazz pianist and composer T. Monk (1917-1982). Included in the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. PG-13, 90 min., 1988. Wednesday, April 19, 6-7:30 p.m.

"Pandaemonium." Historical drama on the friendship of English Romantic poets Coleridge and Wordsworth, with actress Samantha Morton, and directed by Julien Temple. Not widely available on disc or streaming. "Literate and handsome" – NY Times. PG-13, 119 min., 2000. Wednesday., April 26, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy April birthday to Jimmy Baker Jr., Linda Cresci, Lindsay Emrick, Shlomit Heller, Lulu J., Noah J., Vince Keehan, Liana Luján, Zoë-Elise Quon, Danica N., Andrew P., Baby P., Siva Raj, David Roberts, Faustina Sarah Maria Sullivan, Cameron Young and Ariel Yuan. *To add a name to the monthly birthday list, email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Free.*

HOUSING WANTED

Retired female journalist looking for part-time multi-month housesitting, sublet or private bedroom and bath in a house. Contact Carol Clurman, 703-946-6083, cclurman@gmail.com.

MEET THE EDITOR OF THE RICHMOND REVIEW

Meet the editor of the Richmond Review: You are invited to meet with Michael Durand, editor and publisher of the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers and the RichmondSunsetNews.com website. Bring your story ideas, feedback, suggestions, questions, announcement items and advertising inquiries. We are also welcoming new writers and photographers interested in contributing stories and photos. One Richmond storefront, 802 Clement St., every second Wednesday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m. For more information, call 415-706-6428 or email Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com. Scheduled appointments not necessary but appreciated.

PHOTOGRAPHER FOR HIRE

Tyrone Bartoli has been a professional photographer since 1995. He is available for a wide range of photo shoots. Call for a free consultation: 415-846-7838. Also, check out his Instagram page @tyronebartoli. Ask for the Richmond Review discount. Learn more at TyroneBartoli.com.

SALVATION ARMY GOLF TOURNAMENT

The Salvation Army San Francisco is having a golf tournament at the Presidio Golf Course. The tournament offers a way for people to "take a swing" at homelessness at the first annual Swing for the Way Out Golf Tournament on April 14 at the Presidio Golf Course, benefiting "The Way Out," our ambitious new initiative to combat homelessness in San Francisco. We will feature a shotgun start best-ball scramble tournament, with players' prizes, followed by a banquet, silent auction and inspiring guest speakers. Go to https://paybee.io/in-person-event/tsags/5 to sign up a foursome, become a sponsor or find more information on this event! For questions or to donate an item to our silent auction, contact Dana Jauco at dana.jauco@usw.salvationarmy.org. You can also learn more about the 140 years of ongoing support The Salvation Army has provided in the community by visiting https://westernusa.salvationarmy.org/san_francisco/.

STAMP COLLECTOR AND STAMP COLLECTIONS

Stamp collector is buying stamps and stamp collections. I am buying the "older stamps" from the 1800s to 1930. American Philatelic Society member since 1986. Pictures are appreciated. Call or text message 415-533-0761.

Announcements: $1 per word, 20 word minimum. Share birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, births, obituaries, graduations, sports highlights, business accomplishments, retirements, college admissions, etc.

FREE: Add a name to the monthly birthday list or submit free community events at no charge. We support small businesses: Free announcements for small businesses celebrating an anniversary or other significant milestone or event. Send announcement to Editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com.

Announcements will run in the Richmond Review and Sunset Beacon newspapers (36,000 copies) and on RichmondSunsetNews.com (20,000+ views per month). Ads must be pre-paid. Deadline: 20th of the month. Mail check to: P.O. Box 16035, S.F., CA 94116. Call 415-706-6428 or email editor@RichmondSunsetNews.com for more details.

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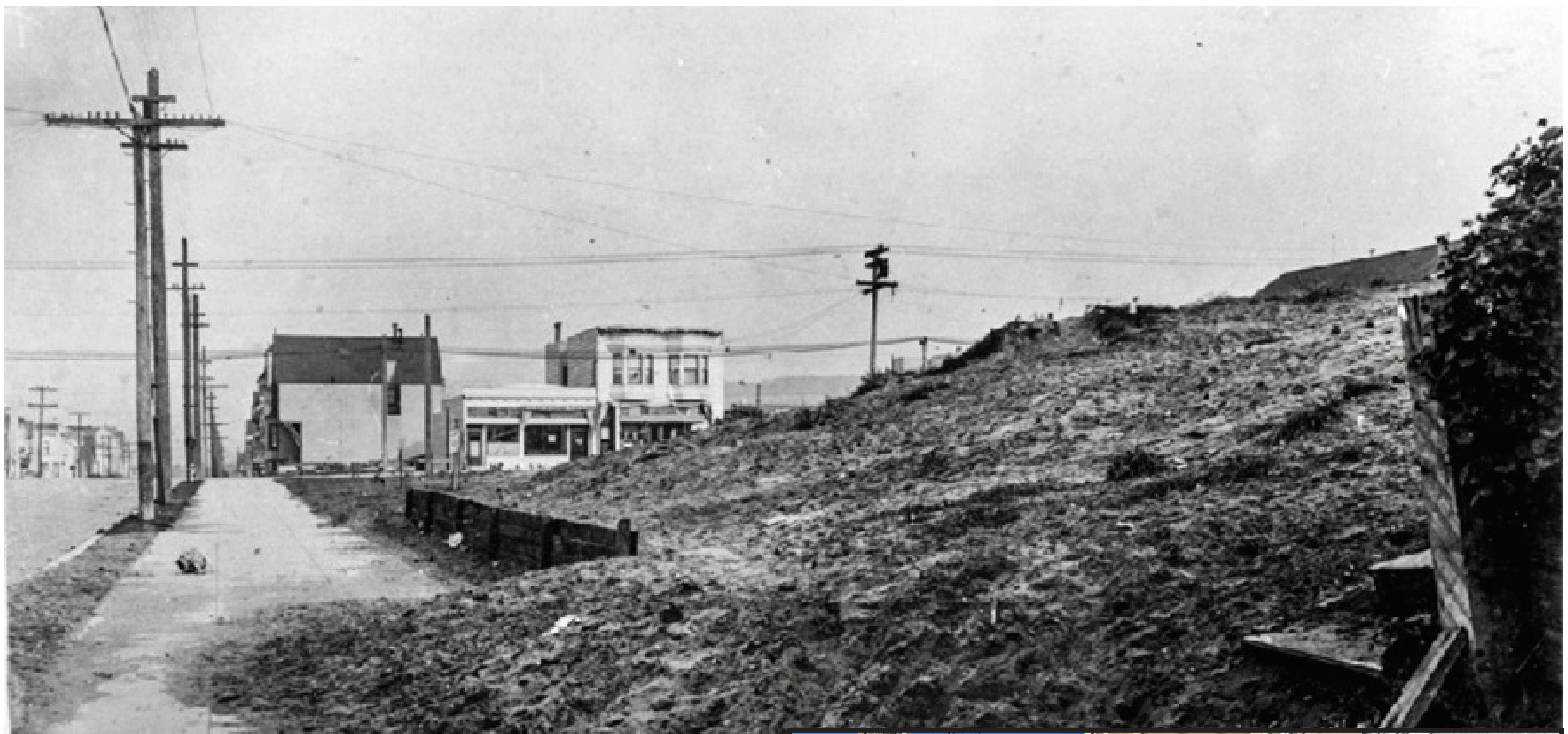
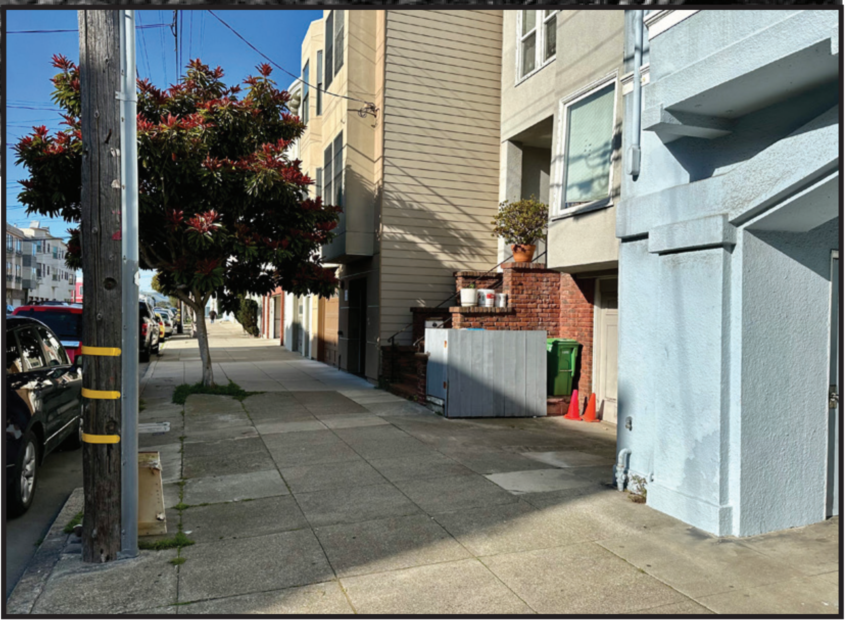
‘Then and Now’: 20th Avenue Between Geary and Clement





Above: Sand was still the main feature of real estate in the Richmond District, as seen in this Dec. 22, 1914, photo. ***Photo courtesy of a private collector/Western Neighborhoods Project/OpenSFHistory.***

Right: What was once a huge pile of sand is now a multi-million-dollar collection of homes and apartments. The photo at right was taken on March 20 from the same location as the above picture – the east-side sidewalk on 20th Avenue between Geary Boulevard and Clement Street, looking north. According to data published in longtime Richmond Review columnist John Lee’s chart this month, the average sales price of five properties sold in the Richmond District last month was $2.95 million. ***Photo by Michael Durand.***

Coming Back After the Pandemic, Purusha Yoga Studio on Balboa Re-Opens

By Beth Lederer

Co-owners Eric Spark (left) and Joy Ravelli recently reopened Purusha, their yoga studio on Balboa Street, between 38th and 39th avenues. The business is making a comeback after being sidelined by the COVID-19 pandemic. ***Photo by Beth Lederer.***

A chalkboard easel stands outside of Purusha Yoga Studio in the Richmond District welcoming Yoga students back. The beautiful penmanship demands attention: “Purusha OPEN, Happy New Year 2023, Welcome OM.”

Over the last few years during the pandemic, an empty storefront would have greeted a passerby.

Purusha is a holistic yoga studio and yoga training school on the Balboa Street shopping corridor in the Outer Richmond. Purusha closed in March 2020 when the COVID-19 shelter-in-place order was issued. To respond, the teachers immediately pivoted to teaching online.

The studio reopened on New Year’s Day, 2023, at the same location on Balboa between 38th and 39th avenues bringing smiles, relief and happiness to many former students and teachers who are part of the Purusha community.

Business co-owners and husband and wife team, Joy Ravelli and Eric Sparks expressed their gratitude to supporters.

“The reopening of Purusha Yoga Studio came about through much outpouring and support from the community,” they said.

“Everybody in the neighborhood kept saying, ‘Can you please reopen the studio?’” For Ravelli it was really hard because it was such a painful end. “Yeah, it took a while for my heart to open again,” she said.

Ravelli opened the doors of Purusha in 2010 on Balboa Street. She had started Purusha in Massachusetts in 1999. The loss of Ravelli’s son Alex in 2009 was a powerful motivation to open the studio.

“I didn’t know what to do with my life after such a big loss,” Ravelli said.

“Purusha yoga studio is a great resource,” said Kathy Gehlken, a longtime Ayurveda teacher and Sanskrit scholar.

“I was very sad when they had to close due to the pandemic and am very excited that they have reopened,” she said. “What makes Purusha so special is their commitment to making yoga accessible to everyone and to building a vibrant and loving community around yoga and service to others. I am deeply grateful to be part of that.”

Ravelli and Sparks faced the same challenges many business owners were forced to deal with.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was another factor that affected their decision to reopen. Both Ravelli and Sparks were the only two employees of Purusha. Everyone else were contractors.

“The PPP started to come through for other businesses, though it really didn’t come through for us,” Ravelli said.

Ravelli and Sparks had invested in building a brand-new yoga studio in Berkeley in 2018. They were only open for a few months when the pandemic hit.

“When the owners asked them if they were coming back, he told them they could not have in-person classes,” Sparks said.

Subsequently, the owners closed the Berkeley studio. Sparks and Ravelli walked away from their new studio, losing all their investments and deposits.

Ravelli and Sparks filed for personal bankruptcy, and they had to practice under their personal names for one year.

According to Ravelli, Purusha had a thriving school online for teachers to become yoga teachers, advanced yoga teachers and yoga therapists.

Purusha was able to keep its accreditation and students could find them on the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT) or Yoga Alliance.

“We had about 300 students who went through the school,” Ravelli said. “A lot of yoga schools did that; many people got their yoga teacher training online. We now have students from all over the world – Spain, Switzerland, Canada, Mexico and all over the East Coast.”

In February, Purusha held at the studio their first training for yoga and ad-

Continued on page 13

POLICE BLOTTER

Burglary, Carrying a Concealed Weapon: 200 Block of Clement Street, Feb. 17, 6 p.m.

The suspects' vehicle (Kia Forte) was casing potential victim vehicles at various hot spots throughout the City. A citywide plainclothes team observed the suspects and started a rolling surveillance of the Kia.

The suspects in the Kia committed an auto boost on the 200 block of Clement Street and then fled the district. The suspects were observed discarding unwanted stolen items from the Kia. The discarded items were recovered, and an arrest plan was developed to safely apprehend the suspects.

Spike strips were authorized and deployed successfully to safely slow the Kia. The suspects' vehicle stopped, the passenger exited the vehicle, fled on foot, and was quickly taken into custody without incident.

The driver of the Kia took off driving again and later caused a vehicle collision at a controlled intersection where vehicles were stopped for a red light. The driver exited the vehicle, fled on foot, and was taken into custody after a foot pursuit. During the foot pursuit, the driver was observed discarding a firearm under a parked vehicle. It was recovered by officers. The firearm was loaded with a 22-round magazine with one round in the chamber.

Searches of the suspects and the suspects' vehicle revealed evidence related to the incidents, which was seized. Both suspects (driver and passenger) were arrested and booked.

The case was assigned to SFPD Burglary Unit which is conducting the follow-up investigation.

Vandalism Graffiti: 4200 Block of Geary Boulevard, Feb. 23, 1:02 a.m.

An officer observed two suspects in the act of tagging a building's wall with spray paint. The officer attempted to detain both suspects, but they fled on foot. Both suspects were detained after foot pursuits with the help of back-up officers.

The suspects were identified then arrested for vandalism graffiti.

Carjacking With a Gun: 200 Block of 11th Avenue, Feb. 26, 9:55 p.m.

During the course of a carjacking investigation, officers from the Richmond, Northern, Southern, Central, Tenderloin stations, CHP, Oakland PD and Oakland/CHP Aerial Unit assisted in the capture of the suspects.

Richmond officers on scene immediately ascertained vital information from victims and witnesses and began tracking a victim's laptop. Officers provided updated tracking locations to dispatch, which broadcast the updates citywide.

The victim was dropping off his friend in front of her house when the suspect with a firearm approached his vehicle. The suspect ordered the victim to exit the vehicle and give him his keys. The victim complied in fear and gave the suspect his cell phone and wallet. The suspect drove away in the victim's vehicle.

Two additional victims reported an attempted robbery involving the same hijacked vehicle.

Tenderloin officers observed the carjacked vehicle and attempted to apprehend the suspects, who refused to stop and took off. The suspects in the carjacked vehicle were pursued to Oakland.

Per the Aerial Unit, the suspects exited the victim's vehicle in Oakland. The suspects fled on foot while taking off several items of clothing as they were running. The Aerial Unit assisted in apprehending the suspects who tried to conceal themselves. The aerial unit advised that the suspects ran into a driveway trying to hide from searching PD units. A perimeter was set up and commands were given to the suspects. Both suspects were taken into custody without further incident. The vehicle was towed for CSI (crime scene investigation) processing.

Evidence linking the suspects to the crime was recovered from the scenes and vehicle, including a Glock firearm. An SFPD computer check revealed the recovered firearm was stolen out of Fresno.

The case was assigned to SFPD Burglary Unit which is conducting the follow up investigation.

Robbery With a Weapon: 7800 Block of Geary Boulevard, March 1, 12:35 p.m.

The victim parked his rental vehicle in front of a drugstore and entered the store, which is near a known auto boost hotspot.

The victim returned to his vehicle to find suspect #1 removing his backpack through his newly smashed window. Suspect #1 then got into the front passenger seat of a waiting vehicle that was double parked nearby. The victim ran up to suspects' vehicle and tried to grab his backpack from suspect #1. Suspect #1 refused to let go of the stolen backpack and pushed the victim to the ground. Suspect #2, the driver, drove the vehicle over victim's right ankle and right arm while fleeing the area.

The victim sustained injuries during incident.

The case was assigned to SFPD Robbery Unit which is conducting the follow up investigation.

Vandalism Graffiti: 5800 Block of Geary Boulevard, March 8, 1:09 a.m.

During a Richmond Station graffiti suppression operation, officers observed the suspect in the act of tagging a business parklet with spray paint. The tagger had two additional subjects with him, who were standing at their double-parked getaway vehicle. Officers detained all the suspects, identified all subjects and began an investigation.

Evidence connecting the suspects to the crime was recovered and seized. Unable to speak with the parklet's owner to determine the value of the damage and repair, officers had to issue a citation and release the taggers from the scene, per SFPD policy.

The case was assigned to the SFPD General Works Unit which is conducting the follow-up investigation.

Robbery With a Gun During Auto Boost, Assault Causing Serious Injuries: 26th Avenue and California Street, March 9, 6:14 p.m.

The victim was walking back to his vehicle with his daughter when he observed a suspect vehicle double parked next to his vehicle.

The victim saw suspect #1 going through his belongings at his vehicle's open driver door. The victim confronted suspect #1 and was immediately attacked by suspect #1, who punched him repeatedly.

Suspect #2, the driver of the getaway vehicle, got out of vehicle and walked over to the victim as he was fighting with suspect #1. Suspect #2 pulled out a semi-auto firearm, then "racked" the slide back, pointed the semi-auto firearm at the victim and yelled "Get off of him!"

The victim stopped fighting with suspect #1. Suspect #1 then punched the victim several more times as he stood there in fear of the semi-auto firearm, causing the victim's tooth to chip.

Both suspects got back in the getaway vehicle and fled the area.

The victim was treated at a local hospital and was in stable condition.

The case was assigned to the SFPD Robbery Unit which is conducting the follow-up investigation.

Robbery With a Gun During the Theft of a Catalytic Converter: Rossi Avenue and Anza Street, March 11, 4:35 a.m.

The victim was sitting in his parked car when the suspect vehicle pulled up and double parked next to him.

All four suspects in the vehicle exited. Suspects #2, #3 and #4 went right under the victim's car and started jacking and cutting out the catalytic converter as suspect #1 stood watch.

The victim believed none of the suspects were aware he was inside the car. The victim exited his vehicle, which spooked suspect #1, as the other suspects were cutting away.

Suspect #1 pulled out a pistol and pointed it at the victim and demanded all his money.

Moments later, suspects #2, #3 and #4 finished cutting out the catalytic converter and reappeared from under the victim's car.

All four suspects then ran back into the double-parked getaway vehicle, fleeing the area with the freshly removed catalytic converter.

The case was assigned to the SFPD Robbery Unit which is conducting the follow up investigation.

Purusha Yoga

Continued from page 12

vanced yoga teachers. They offered a hybrid session.

"It works well for absenteeism if people need to go to a wedding or have something personal," Sparks said.

Kari Marble joined the studio in February, teaching prenatal and postnatal yoga. Marble specializes in women's health in childbearing years and beyond. The studio where she worked for 20 years permanently closed its physical locations as the whole yoga world was struggling.

In December, Marble saw a social media post that Purusha was reopening.

"Every cell of my body said 'Yes. This is the one. This could be your new yoga home,'" Marble said.

Ravelli believes in the commitment to service, rehabilitation and valuing humanity. In 2008 she started the Purusha Seva Project, a non-profit that brings yoga to underserved and at-risk populations. They brought yoga to veterans, seniors, shelters and the jails.

"Purusha's philosophy is to provide a safe, nurturing and healing environment for all our members, all our students," said Ryan Bach, student admin and tech director. "Empower your true self and connect to community."

Ravelli lives by Purusha's mission to make yoga accessible and to create a studio that is open to all socio-economic groups.

"Eric and I just want to serve the community," Ravelli said.

Referring to the first months of operation, Ravelli said, "I have no expectations, I feel so much better in here than I ever imagined I would, I feel really good."

To learn more, go to purushayoga.org.

April Crossword

Jess Goldstein

ACROSS

1. World Cup org.
5. Abbr. on vitamin bottles
8. Clouds or butterflies, for example
10. Cast a spell upon
11. Dictionary entry below a definition
13. Go bad
14. Guys
15. See 1-down
17. Cut off, as wool
18. Indian honorific
20. Scares stiff
22. "We ___ Never Ever Getting Back Together"
23. Lean
24. Fire engine color
25. Outdated preposition

DOWN

1. With 17-down and 15-across, recently reopened Richmond cinema
2. "Wouldn't miss it!"
3. ___ friends
4. "Life of Pi" director Lee
5. ___ Ridgeback (dog breed)
6. Disincentive
7. Lets go, more bluntly
9. Funny Amy or David
12. Pecan or cashew
16. Canal zone?
17. See 1-down
19. Analogy words
21. Type of shot

1	2	3	4	■	■	5	6	7
8				9	■	10		
11					12			
13			■	14				
■	15		16					■
17					■	18		19
20					21			
22			■	23				
24			■	■	25			

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Commentary

Sandra Lee Fewer

How the City's Budget Works

There has been a lot of news lately about the city budget, even though budget season has not officially started yet.

The conversations about whether or not to fund $27 million in additional police overtime, the funding of nonprofit organizations, reparations, etc., has been used to separate people instead of educating them on the city budget. It is important to not only hear "sound bites" about the budget but to truly understand where your tax dollars are going and how a city that has a budget of $14 billion uses its dollars efficiency or inefficiency. It is important to note that the city budget defines the mayor's priorities and, in turn, her ability to run a big city like San Francisco with a budget that is larger than some countries.

Using numbers from the 2022-2023 budget, we can see that the City approved a budget of almost $14 billion. Since San Francisco is a city and county (the only city in California to be a city and county), the budget includes things like jails and hospitals as well as civic functions, like police, fire and social services. The budget is a result of being an incredibly wealthy district with a significant tax base. The City passes a "rolling" two-year budget and must pass a balanced budget annually.

There are more than 50 city departments. Approximately 50% of the budget consists of self-supporting activities from enterprise departments like the Port, Public Utilities Commission, Municipal Transportation Agency (MTA), Airport and others. The other 50% comprises the City's General Fund, which supports public services such as public health, youth programs, police and fire services, public works and social services.

In the 2022-2023 budget, there was $6.7 billion in the General Fund. In addition to this calculation, there are "set asides," which are voter-approved funds set aside for particular uses, such as the symphony, libraries, etc. Since these funds have been voter approved, the mayor cannot use these funds as part of the General Fund. There is also $2.1 billion that is earmarked for state and federal revenue and reimbursements for mandated uses (MediCal, CalFresh, etc.) That leaves out of a $13.6 billion budget, only $2.6 billion in discretionary General Funds, or money to be used by the mayor to fund city services and programs.

The process starts with the mayor in December when she gives departments her budget instructions. The mayor has until June 1 to submit her budget to the Board of Supervisors, and the Board has only one month to review and approve the budget. The mayor always has the first bite at the budget. The mayor presents her budget, the Board of Supervisors then reviews her proposed budget and seeks out inefficiencies that can be repurposed as "add backs" to the budget. This usually amount to totals between $40 million and $50 million.

As you can see, the vast majority of the city budget is defined by the mayor. The Board of Supervisors has a very small amount of General Funds to allocate to specific programs or areas of need that they collectively support. In the Richmond District, where we only have a handful of non-profit organizations and less homelessness than other districts, we benefit less from the General Fund than other districts of higher needs.

I know there have been arguments made to eliminate district elections. This is one reason we need to have district elections if we want our share of city services and the city budget. We need to have someone advocating for our neighborhood, our specific needs, and that means having someone at the table to ensure the city budget serves us out here on the west side too. That goes not only for the city budget but also from city departments like MTA, public health, public works, etc. While downtown gets its streets power washed twice a day, we need our streets cleaned on a regular basis, too. While Union Square has multiple police officers on every corner, we need to have beat officers on our commercial corridors to serve our small businesses. While downtown has a fire suppression system to protect it from fires, we need a system out here too to protect our homes. The list goes on and on.

The question we should ask is: "How much of the General Fund directly benefits our neighborhood and where and how are services being allocated?"

Using the budget for political attacks on our supervisor is made to separate us and does not make us stronger as a neighborhood. We want our representatives to ask questions on our behalf, to advocate for our neighborhood, and that is exactly what the "powers that be" don't want as it questions the decisions on use of city departments and the General Fund. I am not saying that downtown is not important, but the west side of the City matters as much as downtown and our small businesses are just as important as downtown businesses. Supervisor Chan was right to push back and ask questions. As budget season begins to ramp up, we want and need her to ask: "Where is District 1 in the city budget?" and we as taxpayers should support that line of questioning … for all of us out here on the west side.

Sandra Lee Fewer is a fourth-generation Chinese-American San Franciscan, former Board of Education commissioner, former member of the SF Board of Supervisors representing the Richmond District and has lived in the Richmond for more than 60 years.

SFPD Budget Boost

Continued from page 1

academy only had 12 graduates. In the current academy there are eight. We need to change the narrative of what it means to be a police officer in San Francisco. It's honorable today to be a police officer in San Francisco. We need to tell people that, so people are willing to apply."

"Right now, at the Northern Station, which is the station that covers most of District 2, we are 50 officers short, and that plays out in many different ways," Stefani said. "All of our neighborhoods are suffering, and I don't know a colleague of mine who hasn't asked Chief Scott or the command staff for more officers in their district because something is going wrong that requires a police officer."

At a March 21 meeting of the Board, however, Preston fired back.

"I believe that SFPD needs oversight at this moment, needs it badly," he said. "And the last thing the department needs is another blank check. The reality here is that police wildly overspent their already increased budget and now want a bailout with more raises, bonuses and unlimited overtime, most of it going to protect luxury retail stores and tourists in areas that are already saturated.

"It's worth remembering that after getting a staggering $50 million budget increase in the summer of 2022, the department immediately began a reckless spending spree, millions on duplicative overtime to serve downtown interests like Louis Vuitton," Preston said.

From statistics provided by the SFPD to the Board, overall it seems that more officers and resources have gone into the Central Station – the station that covers Union Square and that handles many parades – than most of the others in the last year.

After the debacle of Union Square looting in late 2021, the SFPD was not about to let that happen twice, so they raised their profile there last holiday season.

"Rather than seeking approval, while running up these massive bills in the fall of 2022, SFPD continued overspending as if money were no object," Preston continued. "No other department in this city could or would even try to get away with this kind of financial mismanagement. The mayor didn't even seek this supplemental until SFPD had already overspent by over $22.1 million … before the mayor even filed or introduced a supplemental request. They have recklessly overspent as if using Monopoly money."

Stefani didn't hesitate to return fire.

"This idea that they're just out there protecting Louis Vuitton literally drives me nuts because it is so disingenuous," she said. "What is happening is that we are protecting people because we want them to feel safe to come to downtown to spend dollars because we get sales tax revenue. Sales tax revenue is down. And what does that mean? Why are we facing a $728 million budget deficit over the next two years?

"It's not just 'to protect Louis Vuitton'; it's to make sure that we protect San Franciscans. It's to make sure that people want to come here and shop and visit and tour and have conventions. People don't want to do that if they don't feel the city is safe."

After Chan expressed gratitude for the SFPD's service, she also mentioned the overtime money.

"A supplemental from any city department really should bring to question whether there was mismanagement of city government and public dollars," Chan said. "There seems to be a direction from our mayor to our police department to invest more in downtown, protecting designer bags (more) than our Asian elders.

"We understand that we need to support our small businesses in tackling burglaries and theft. We do need to answer that demand."

David Heller, president of the Greater Geary Boulevard Merchants Association, agrees wholeheartedly. In fact his shop, The Beauty Network, was burglarized twice within three weeks and he has plenty of company.

"On this block alone the UPS store got broken into, the massage place got broken into," Heller said.

He understands that the police are asking for more money to pay for overtime.

"If we give them the money this time are they willing to come and explain how it's going, quarterly?"

Jimmy Chau owns Jimmy's Diamond Glass in the Richmond District and he replaces busted windows. He has noticed a significant increase in that sort of business within the last couple of years and throughout the City, so he estimates he gets about 10 orders per week now, although some are cases of vandalism instead of burglary.

SFPD Chief William Scott took responsibility for the situation, but with a caveat.

"Ultimately the overtime, everything in this department falls upon the department head, which is me," Scott said. "This decision of our spending was not made in a vacuum. We've been working with both the Mayor's Budget Office and the Controller's Office all the way, with predictions about what our spending patterns are."

He also stated that these decisions were not made in secret.

"We knew early on that we were headed for a supplemental and those discussions were ongoing up until the point where the supplemental got before this board," Scott said.

Melgar said the pandemic has changed crime patterns, but tourism is still important to protect.

"The overtime spending that has been done, we can argue whether or not it was effective but the fact is our city lives off of tourism. That's our bread and butter," Melgar said. "It is folks who work in retail downtown but also the people who clean the hotels and work as

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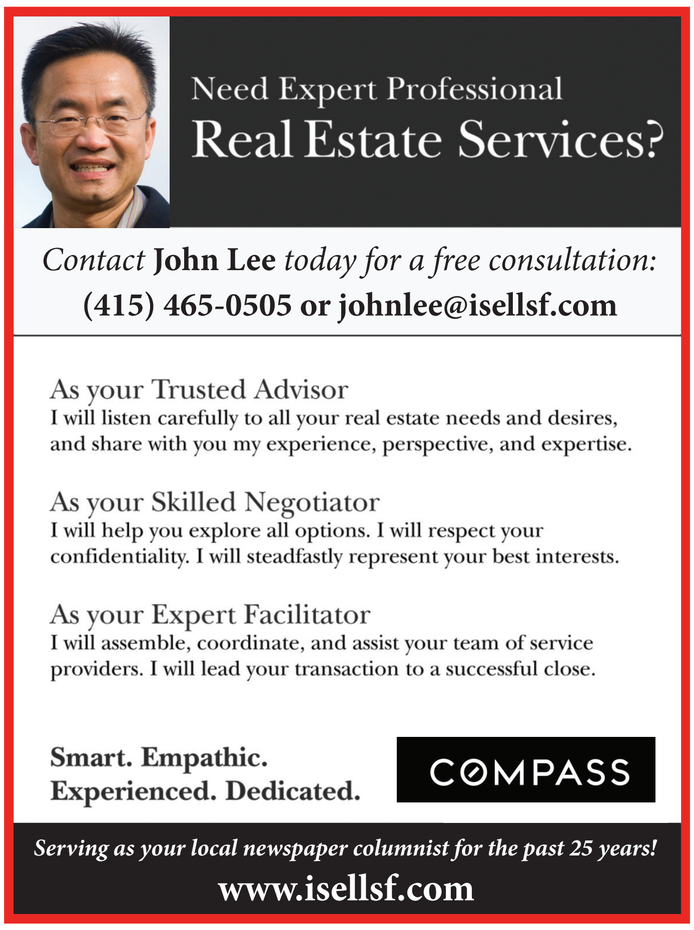

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Kehinde Wiley

Continued from page 1

The exhibition's title comes from a book by the French philosopher Michel Foucault, referring to societal suppression.

The vulnerable portrayals of Black people struck down, wounded, resting or dead are haunting. "An Archeology of Silence" is a piercing statement about systemic violence against Black people. Yet Wiley also insists on delivering an uplifting message. "Sure, it's a downer," he said, "but this work is about the desire to be seen, to be defiantly alive. I'm not just creating a political statement, I'm creating a much more personal, poetic and spiritual one."

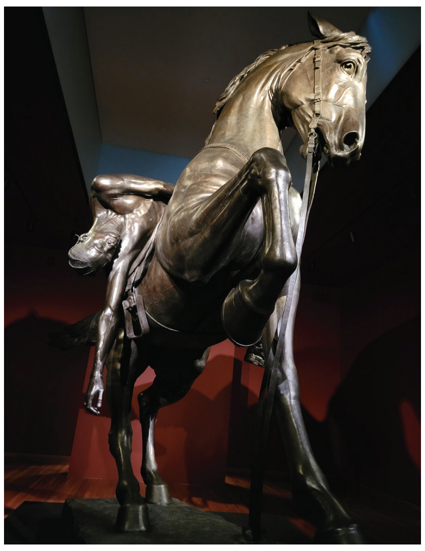
To balance the bleakness, Wiley features decorative imagery, such as flowers and overgrown vines. "The landscapes are sparkling with life," he said. "The decorative filagree is demanding space.

"Even in death and decay," Wiley said, "there's an insistence upon beauty and grace, even in the worst of what humanity has to throw at you. There's a stubborn holding onto life and celebration in the midst of all this suffering. I'm tired of seeing the work of African Americans only relating to suffering."

While a few or these works first emerged in 2008 in Wiley's exhibit, "Down," in New York, the 25-piece "An Archeology of Silence" expanded greatly during the height of the pandemic. Wiley spent much of that time in Dakar, Senegal, where he set up a multidisciplinary artist-in-residence program called Black Rock. Senegalese people became his models for new paintings and sculptures, making the concept more global. At the same time, Wiley felt more of an urgency to share his art after the George Floyd murder in 2020 and once the Black Lives Matter movement took hold.

The centerpiece of the exhibit (created in 2022 and given the title, "An Archeology of Silence"), is a 17.5-foot-tall bronze sculpture of a shirtless dead Black man, draped over a majestic horse. It's Wiley's response to seeing monuments in Virginia of triumphant Confederate officers on horseback.

"I have been blessed enough to bear witness to some of the horrors that we all have," he said. "And I've been blessed enough to have the tools to do something about it."



The centerpiece of the show has the same title as Wiley's exhibit: "An Archaeology of Silence." Bronze sculpture, 2021. *Photo by Noma Faingold.*

Wiley was raised by a single mother of six children in South Central Los Angeles. His father, who had been a scholarship student in the U.S., had to return to Nigeria when his visa ran out. Wiley wasn't able to connect with him again until he was 20 years old, thanks to a Fulbright grant. Jeremy Stone, who was an advisor of Wiley's at the SFAI and assisted with his grant application, remembers him as a quiet, focused and thoughtful student. She has kept in touch with him.

"He was working on technique and craft, but he knew what he wanted to do," said the art appraiser, who has her own San Francisco-based company, Business Matters in the Visual Art.

For Wiley, the exhibit being in San Francisco feels like a homecoming.

"The Bay Area is a coming of age for me. I would argue that the Bay Area is a coming of age for America," he said. "This part of the world was at the core of the cultural revolution that America was so heavily marked by at the end of the '50s and the core of the '60s. It became the site of resistance for people of color, for the marginalized, for the queer, for the inconvenient. San Francisco is that place where people question authority and assumptions."

Abram Jackson, director of interpretation for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, tackled maximizing community involvement by seeking out several activist organizations as partners to help shape the overall experience of the exhibit.

"We had to localize it," said Jackson. "We had to be really intentional and caring for our visitors."

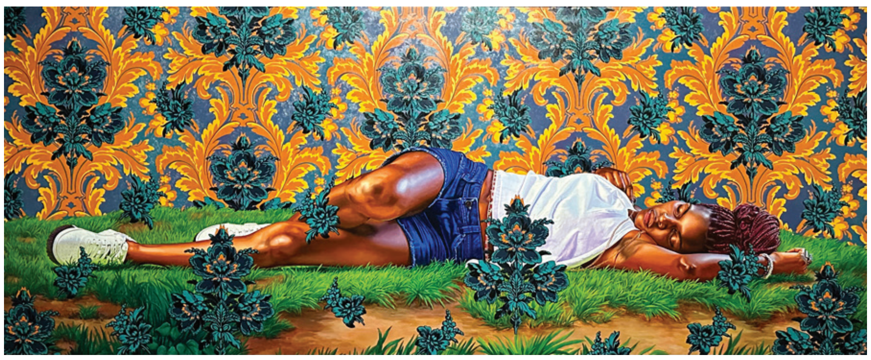
Contributions by the group of advisors include edits of the wall text and altering the language of some materials. For example, the phrase of "Black bodies" shifted to "Black people" and "state-sanctioned violence" was changed to "systemic violence."

Rev. Wanda Johnson, founder of the Oscar Grant Foundation (and mother of Oscar Grant, who was murdered on the train platform at Fruitvale Station by a BART police officer in 2009), provided commentary on a couple of paintings for the audio guide.

Jackson worked with the FAMSF's Director of Public Programs and Community Engagement, Devin Malone, to create the Respite Room, adjacent to the exhibit to give visitors space to pause and process. There's also a resource room where educational, grief and mental health materials will be available.

Wiley is considered a rock star in the art world. Some have called him a genius. He's building an empire – not just for himself. In addition to Black Rock, he has studios in Beijing and Brooklyn and is providing opportunities for young artists to develop. Who knows what's next for him? He's just as likely to look inward for inspiration as he is to find a new muse anywhere in the world. "If you really think about my entire body of work, it's a self-portrait," said Wiley. "Who's looking?"

Kehinde Wiley: An Archaeology of Silence runs from March 18 to Oct. 15, at the de Young Museum. Free weekends (one per month) is sponsored by $1 million grant from Google.org. There will also be grief workshops. For more information: www.famsf.org.



Kehinde Wiley's "Reclining Nude in Wooded Setting." *Photo by Michael Durand.*

SFPD Budget

Continued from page 14

dishwashers and food servers who are suffering from the situation right now, where people perceive that it is not safe to come to San Francisco and perception is important. We need to address it."

Board President Aaron Peskin gave a historical perspective, saying the dubious goal for a finite number of total SFPD officers was made a generation ago.

"It was silly. It was politics," he said. "It was done on the back of a napkin in a bar in North Beach. It never deserved to be in the Charter, but a whole bunch of supervisors were scared about the politics of public safety, so they voted to put it on the ballot and the voters adopted it.

"We've never met those numbers except for twice. And so I want to disabuse people … on not creating false expectations," Peskin said. "We should not be running around and saying to the population that we are 500 or 600 cops short; it's misleading.

"Between last year and this year, the police department budget, unlike any other department, had a massive year-over-year increase from about $657 million to the current year's budget of $713 million. That is almost a 10% increase that was not enjoyed by other departments."

With their final vote, the supplemental was passed with a 9-2 vote, with Supervisors Preston and Shamann Walton voting against.

Herons

Continued from page 1

mark the site's location. Children are welcome. The program is free, but donations are welcome.

This year, Heron Watch volunteers will lead family walks each Saturday around Stow Lake and on Strawberry Hill for children 7-12 accompanied by an adult. There is a suggested donation for adults; children are always free.

For more information and the observation locations map, go to sfnature.org or email info@sfnature.org. Nancy H. DeStefanis is the executive director of San Francisco Nature Education. She first discovered the nest at Stow Lake in Golden Gate Park in 1993.

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